Ideas Emerging from May 21 Task Force Meeting

The following provides a brief summary of some of the ideas that were suggested at the May 21st meeting of the Service Guidelines Task Force meeting. Some of the ideas could be considered as possible task force recommendations. This is not meant to be a complete summary of the meeting.

Possible Ideas for Changing Service Types or Service Guidelines

- *Consider a new service type for express bus service.* Express routes operating in the peak period play an important role in getting riders to employment hubs, and between regional centers, but the productivity of the one-way express routes does not necessarily compare favorably to that of frequent two-way, all day services. A new service type for express services would allow Metro to evaluate express services against one another, emphasizing the value of the function of these routes in the larger network. Also, look at the function of some express routes that do not take riders all the way to the Seattle Core, but may drop riders at a transfer point outside of the Seattle Core.

- *Consider a new service type for alternative services.* Alternative services, including Dial-a-Ride transit ("DART"), play an important role in providing demand responsive transit service to low density areas, rural communities, and/or to emerging markets that do not yet have sufficient population or job density to support traditional, fixed route service. Currently, Dial-a-Ride Transit services are evaluated against the Non-Seattle Core service type (because no Dial-a-Ride transit services operate in the Seattle Core). The productivity of the alternative services tends to be lower performing due to the low population and job density in these areas. A new service type for alternative service would allow Metro to evaluate alternative services against one another.

- *Develop minimum service standards for each service types.* Creating minimum service standards for each service type could address concerns during future reduction scenarios. These minimum service standards could provide a minimum number of trips, frequency, connections to centers, number of days service will be provided, the time of day, frequency of service, distance between stops, or walking distance to bus stops. Service levels for investment scenarios could address the kind of actions that would trigger new or expanded service, such as new housing or employment density, investment in transit friendly infrastructure (e.g. transit priority lanes and/or signals), or infrastructure to improve access to transit (e.g. sidewalk infrastructure). The service standards could also address the length of time it should take to get from one center to another.

- *Scaling of points for geographic value.* Currently points are awarded for those corridors that provide a primary connection between regional growth, manufacturing/industrial centers, and between transit activity centers. Points for geographic value are awarded in an all or nothing manner, with connections between transit activity centers receiving either "0" or "5" points, and connections between regional growth or manufacturing/industrial centers receiving either "0" or "10" points. Points could be awarded on a sliding scale, perhaps depending on the size and density of the centers. (Note: Potentially, points could be awarded to secondary connections between centers, as an "added value" consideration.)

Major Themes from Discussion of Values (Tradeoffs)

- *The current values (tradeoffs) appear to be about right.* Some task force members said the current balance between New Markets and Existing Markets; Productivity and Coverage; Peak-Only and All-Day, and Non-Transit Dependent Riders and Transit Dependent Riders seems to be about right, given the current limitation on resources.
- *Some greater emphasis on supporting new markets.* Some task force members said that transit services should support those communities (both urban and suburban) that are taking actions to create more dense population and job centers. However, it was acknowledged that this is difficult to accomplish with flat or declining resources.
- *Some greater emphasis on serving transit-dependent riders.* Some task force members suggested that Metro should place more emphasis on providing service to those with limited mobility options. Task force members discussed the difference between riders that are transit-dependent by choice or necessity, especially as it pertains to younger generations choosing to live "car-free." .
- *Different values apply to different parts of the county.* The graphic describes the tradeoffs Metro attempts to balance for the system as a whole. But several task force members said that different parts of the county may place a higher priority on one value over another.

Other Ideas

- *There is a need for new resources to support the growth of transit services*. Transit ridership is growing rapidly, and supporting riders in every part of the county will require additional resources. Communities must feel that current resources are being utilized fairly and effectively.
- *The concept of mobility is an important value to consider when evaluating the system.* Some members suggested that it is important to consider the number of centers riders can access, and the time it takes for riders to get from one center to another. This should account for frequency of service and the number of transfers required.
- *Use alternative services for to provide new or emerging markets, to "reward" communities making transit-friendly growth decisions, and for service in rural communities.* Focus Metro fixed route, scheduled service on the major corridors (the "spine"). Use alternative service to provide services to lower density communities and to initiate service in growing corridors, where densities and demand do not yet support regular fixed route service.
- *Increase management of Park and Rides; investment could reward growing communities.* Metro could work in partnership with cities and other partners to invest in Park and Ride lots in locations that would support strong ridership and improved access to transit.
- *Explore data sources that would help Metro better understand the origin and destination of riders.* For example, it was suggested that Metro should consider using data from ORCA, including LIFT data (low-income fares), to identify origins and destinations of transit riders.

- ***Next step should be to model some of the task force suggested changes.*** Some task force members would like to see how some of the ideas being suggested by the group will effect service decisions.